

Letter from R. C. GUNN, ESQ., F.R.S. F.L.S. &c., respecting the Discovery of Keys in the Shore Formation of Corio Bay, and the Paper relating to them read by Mr. Rawlinson, C.E., on the 16th November, 1874.

“Launceston, 29th May, 1875.

“DEAR SIR,—Ever since the receipt of your letter of 16th December last, I have been too ill to attend to business of any kind, or to make the necessary references to enable me satisfactorily to answer your inquiry as to the (alleged) ‘discovery of some iron keys under 15 feet of diluvium near Corio Bay, by Mr. C. J. La Trobe.’ I now annex all the information I can supply on the subject, and which I think will be deemed sufficient.

“I remember the circumstances of the alleged discovery of the keys in the position named by you perfectly well.

“I saw the two keys (three were, I believe, found) in the possession of my friend Mr. La Trobe, in Melbourne, in the end of September or beginning of October, 1849 (*not in 1845 or 1846*), immediately after they were picked up. He promised to accompany me to Geelong on 4th October, but early on the morning of that day I received a note from him, in which he says, ‘I find it impossible to get away from my office with a good conscience this week, and am sorry that it is so. I have written the enclosed to Mr. Addis to ask him to show you where the keys were found. Let me know when you return.’

“I proceeded to Geelong on the above day, and next morning, accompanied by Mr. Addis, visited the spot where the keys were discovered. On questioning the lime-burner, I ascertained that he did *not* pick the keys out of the stratum of shells at the depth alleged, but found them at the bottom of the hole, mixed with some shells, and *assumed* that they had dropped along with them. I was perfectly satisfied that the keys never had been embedded in the stratum of shells, as supposed by the lime-burner and by Mr. La Trobe, consequently all the theories based on that assumption fall to the ground. The keys were small, about the size ordinarily used for chests of drawers, *of very modern make*, not encrusted with lime, and very slightly corroded with rust.

“I have little doubt but that they had been dropped by some inhabitant of Geelong, lay in the grass for some—not very long—time, and fell to the bottom of the hole from the surface *after the excavation was made*, the margin being formed of a rather light, crumbling soil.

“I expressed my views and opinions to Mr. La Trobe on my return to Melbourne, and thought the whole question had been considered as settled, until I saw a letter from Mr. La Trobe in *The Australasian* of June 3rd, 1871, under the heading, ‘Port Phillip a Lake.’

“Yours very faithfully,

“R. C. GUNN, F.R.S. F.L.S. &c.

“F. J. PIRANI, Esq.

“*Secretary to the
Royal Society of Victoria.*”